



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **DHS LAUNCHES SECOND NORTHERN BORDER AIR MARINE BRANCH** *Fleet includes state-of-the-art surveillance aircraft to increase border security*

PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK – In an event today at Plattsburgh Air Park, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched the next phase of its initiative to maximize security along the U.S.-Canada border.

The Plattsburgh Air and Marine Branch (AMB) is the second facility to augment DHS Northern border security capabilities with air and marine law enforcement, surveillance and airspace security authorities.

The initiative at the Northern border is aimed at shutting down contraband and human smuggling routes as well as criminal networks that operate along the U.S.-Canada border.

At full capacity, the Plattsburgh AMB will consist of federal law enforcement officers, pilots, aircrew and mission support personnel from the Office of Air and Marine Operations (AMO). Branch assets include one medium lift helicopter, one light enforcement helicopter, one multi-role enforcement aircraft (Pilatus PC-12), one SAFE boat, and one utility boat. The Plattsburgh AMB will conduct regular mission patrols and is equipped for rapid incident response.

The Plattsburgh Air Marine Branch adds another layer to Northern border security. With 35 years experience in air and marine law enforcement and interdiction, AMO will employ many of the same enforcement and interdiction capabilities that have been employed for decades along the Southern border, doing so in coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Canadian authorities, and U.S. state and local law enforcement.

### **New Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft and SAFE Boat for Northern Border Showcased**

At the ceremony today, ICE's AMO showcased the newest addition to its fleet of more than 130 aircraft. The Pilatus (PC-12) is a sophisticated single-engine turbo-prop aircraft that will replace the aging C-12 aircraft currently in AMO's fleet.

Equipped with an extensive sensor package, the new Pilatus has short-field take-off and landing capabilities enabling it to deploy rapidly and operate safely in remote areas. For these reasons, the aircraft is particularly well suited for the northern border. As part of its interdiction and border security efforts, AMO will be deploying the Pilatus at the five sites along the Canadian border.

With a crew of three, the new Pilatus can fly at 270 knots at an altitude of 30,000 feet and with a range of 2,260 miles. The aircraft will substantially enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of AMO operations by reducing operating costs, and by providing increased mission versatility, including air interdiction, aerial surveillance, and logistical support.

AMO added SAFE Boats to its fleet beginning in 2003. SAFE Boats, manufactured in Port Orchard, Washington are fabricated marine-grade aluminum hull vessels, with polyethylene closed cell foam collar. This provides the stability and the buoyancy of a ridged hull inflatable, with an unmatched durability and safety factor.

It is a full-sided boat, with a collar system that cannot deflate and endanger the crew. These features make it ideal for performing missions in rough seas and in areas congested with waterborne debris. Built with a protective cabin area, the vessel has heat and air to protect the crews from the elements. Equipped with three outboard motors, the SAFE boat will enhance AMO's ability to interdict waterborne threats transiting the waters of the Northeast region.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.*